

Mindfulness Meditation 1: Just This Breath

By: Wendy Wolfe, Ph.D.

Introduction: Much of the emotional distress people experience is the result of thinking about upsetting things that have already happened or anticipating negative events that have yet to occur. Distressing emotions such as anger, anxiety, guilt, and sadness are much easier to bear if you only focus on the present – on each moment one at a time. This is an exercise to increase your mindfulness of the present moment so that you can clear away thoughts about past and future events.

Start by focusing on your breathing.

Don't try to change anything about your breathing, just notice the air moving into and out of your body.

Clear your mind of all thoughts and focus only on your breathing.

Notice the sensations of breathing air in.

Notice the sensations of breathing air out.

As you breathe air into your body, fill your mind with the thought "Just this one breath".

As you breathe air out of your body, fill your mind with the thought "Just this one exhale".

Just this one breath in.

Just this one exhale out.

Just this one breath.

Just this one exhale.

Continue focusing only on each breath in and each breath out, do not anticipate anything – even your next breath. Only focus on one breath at a time.

If anything else pops into your mind, push it aside and refocus your attention to each breath.

Continue focusing on each breath in and each exhale out until you hear the sound of the bell.

Adapted from:

Linehan, M.M. (1993). Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder. NY: The Guilford Press.